

## Video Transcript

### National Heritage Areas

**Jonathan Jarvis, Director, National Park Service**

JON JARVIS: I'm here this morning in beautiful Waterford, Virginia, a national historic landmark and the center for a heritage area known as "Journey Through Hallowed Ground." This is an opportunity for me to talk about how the heritage area system can assist communities in tourism, in conservation, and historic preservation.

Some of you are probably wondering the differences and the similarities between traditional national parks and national heritage areas. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was established as the very first national park, and today we have 394 of these units of the national park system that are managed by the National Park Service.

Heritage areas are different. Heritage areas are community-based efforts that preserve and share stories about a region's history and character. Heritage areas contain a mixture of public and private property, including towns, historic sites, parks, trails, commercial districts, and even working farms. All these parts of the community join together around a common theme and promote the cultural, natural, and recreational benefits of the area. Heritage areas are versatile, inclusive, and dynamic. They revitalize communities, strengthen local economies, and create jobs. There are 49 congressionally-designated heritage areas around the country.

National heritage areas are not part of the national park system, but we do consider them part of the family. The National Park Service provides technical assistance and works directly in partnership with heritage areas around the country.

I'm here this morning with Cate Magennis Wyatt, who is the president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. Tell us about the partnership here, Cate.

CATE MAGENNIS WYATT: The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership is a nonprofit, public-private partnership that we did create six years ago to raise awareness of the unparalleled history from Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania, down to Monticello, in Virginia, constituting about a 180-mile-long corridor, about 100 miles wide, and it hosts 13 national park units but is also home to 30 historic main street communities and 47 historic districts and 16 national historic landmarks. We saw this one beautiful road tying it all together, and everybody already committed to sharing their history and understanding the economic benefits that if we could quite frankly re-brand the way people saw this, as the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, the journey to where America happened, then we could invite visitors from far and wide to come and enjoy, as we say, "one tank, 400 years of history."

JON JARVIS: And I understand you've got some great educational programs—that you've been working with schools within the heritage area. Tell me a little bit about that.

CATE MAGENNIS WYATT: Well, we have summer camps for rising sixth through eighth graders called the Extreme Journey, and it's a wonderful two-week summer camp that we do in collaboration with public school systems. Well, the Park Service has been a key partner, of course, not only in creating these programs, but in helping us grow these programs.

JON JARVIS: I'm very excited about the growing relationship between the National Park Service and the national heritage area system. While we provide assistance and work cooperatively within the boundaries of these national heritage areas, we reap extraordinary benefit from that partnership as nonprofits and communities expand the story and raise public awareness about the history of this country.